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The Rest which remaineth to the People
of God, and the Character of such
as shall enjoy it,

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S H E W N
I N A
S E R M O N

Preached at the New North Church

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B O S T O N,

September 13, 1778.

Being the Day of the Death

Q F

Their excellent Pastor

ANDREW ELIOT, D.D.

By **PETER THACHER, A. M.**

Pastor of the First Church in MALDEN.

B O S T O N,
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THE following Discourse contains only plain and practical reflections: When it was composed and delivered, the author had no thought of its publication, and he should not have consented to it now, had it not have been for the earnest desires of some friends whom he could neither disoblige nor deny.

The character of Dr. Eliot, it may well be supposed, was not delivered with the rest of the Sermon: it is added now at the particular desire of the same friends, and the author could wish that in it he had done more justice to this eminent servant of God, or that the duty had been performed by a more capable hand: it wants elegance but not truth; of this every man who knew the subject of it must be convinced. The whole discourse is consecrated to the honor of God and the memory of a man whose character the author, to his latest breath, must esteem and revere!

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HEBREWS iv. 9.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

THE sabbath of God is a day of rest; in it the good man retires from the world, he unbends his mind from secular engagements and fixes it upon God and divine things; its return will always give him pleasure, for it is as one of the days of heaven to his soul. Indeed, this holy day is typical of heaven; the employments in which good people in both are engaged, are similar, for these are spiritual and have a particular reference to God and his glory; in both, the world and all that it affords is under their feet, and God, the great and glorious God, employs all their thoughts and engages all their attention; the sabbath is mentioned in this connexion by the Apostle in our context, and we were induced hereby to make these remarks,

He was led to discourse upon this subject by his quoting a passage from the psalms, in which God declares his anger against Israel and his determination to punish them by not permitting them to enter into his rest; this might refer first and principally

especially to the earthly Canaan which was to be the period of Israel's conflicts, the end of their toils and fatigues; as the Apostle knew this to be an allegorical representation of the heavenly Canaan, the period of the believers trials and sufferings, he goes on to speak of this rest, of the reasons which prevent men from entering into it, even their unbelief and hardness of heart, of the resemblance between this and the christian sabbath, and finally asserts in our text that, *there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

This, my brethren, is a blessed truth a truth capable of supporting the mind under the heaviest afflictions, of animating the most feeble desires, of fanning into a sacred flame the coldest love, and exciting the most careless to constant, cheerful and persevering obedience! How thankful should we then be for such a truth, how earnest to improve it to these important purposes!

My design from the words is,

First, to discourse to you of the nature and properties of the rest which is spoken of in the text. And,

Secondly, to describe something of the character of those to whom this rest belongs, or rather for whom it remains.

Under our first head which is, "to discourse to you on the nature and properties of the rest which is spoken of in the text," we remark, that rest is a cessation from labour and a relief from trouble;

it is repose after fatigue, and sleep after watching; this is the general idea conveyed to us by the word, rest.

But we may be assured that something vastly greater and more important is meant by the Apostle in the text; he is there and in our context distinguishing upon the period of the christian course, that state of happiness and reward to which the faithful servants of Christ shall be received when they have glorified God upon earth and finished the work which he gave them to do; this state is designated in the text by the term rest, concerning which we would observe,

First, That it is not a rest or cessation from the service of God.

Good men by no means wish for such a rest; were it granted them they would be miserable, for their supreme delight is in this service, and they can stay with their master, John iv. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work:* They have indeed the keenest relish for a state of activity in the service of God, and view heaven as a delightful place, because there their whole employment will be to serve God and serve him without interruption.

To suppose that glorified saints cease from the service of their maker would be not only to contradict the plainest dictates of enlightened reason, but also the positive assertions of the word of God, for it is said to John concerning them, Rev. vii. 14, 15. *These are they which came out of great tribulation and*

and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them: Angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim are employed thus, for he makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire. Surely then when the spirits of just men are made perfect, when they come to join the general assembly and church of the first born on high, instead of resting from the service of their maker they will engage in it with redoubled vigor and supreme delight, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. But,

Secondly, It is a rest from sin.

Sin is in the highest degree burthensome to holy men upon earth, it is directly contrary to that new nature which the spirit of God hath implanted within them; they complain of it as their heaviest burden, and they often groan out, in the bitterness of their gracious spirits, *O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from the body of this death!*

Now heaven is an holy place; the holy God, the holy Jesus, holy angels and saints inhabit it; all the exercises of heaven are holy, for they are all parts of the worship of a pure and holy being, there can therefore be no degree of sin in heaven: glorified spirits have constant, uninterrupted communion with God, they must then be perfectly holy, for what communion hath light with darkness, or what fellowship hath the temple of God with idols? Sin and impurity of every kind are everlasting excluded

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the heavenly world by that declaration, Rev. xxi, 27,
And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the lamb's book of life.

In likeness to God, and in conformity to his divine image consists real holiness, but saints when they arrive at glory shall become thus like to God and consequently holy, for declares the pious psalmist, Psal. xviii. 15. *As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.*

They could not endure the sight of God unless they were holy; the sinful, polluted soul shrinks away from the view of perfect purity: when any good men, in the ages of inspiration, were admitted to behold uncommon manifestations of the divine glory, a sense of sin remaining in them induced each of them to cry out, *depart from me for I am a sinful man, O God!* but we know that glorified spirits are admitted to the vision of God; Job asserts this in the strongest terms, when he says, speaking of the now exalted Redeemer, *whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another:* it follows then in the plainest manner that the people of God shall rest from sin and corruption of every kind, shall become perfectly holy in heaven, for they shall see God, the vision of whom they could not endure if there were any remainders of corruption within them.

There is no truth more plain, more express, or more comfortable than this; to be with, to be like, to enjoy an holy God, how transporting is the thought

to the holy soul ! to think that their corruptions shall burden them no more, that they shall no more dishonor their glorious Lord, that they shall be called to sigh no more for the abominations of others, that their desires of holiness, their eager hungerings and thirstings after righteousness shall be compleatly satisfied, what unutterable delight must it give to the children of the most high !

We observe,

Thirdly, That the rest which remaineth to the people of God is a rest from sorrow.

The present, my brethren, is a world of sorrow, *for man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward*; good men are often burdened with spiritual and temporal distresses in the present life, but they rest from both these in heaven.

They rest there from their spiritual troubles, *sin in themselves and others is their greatest trouble*, but this, we saw under the last particular, is removed when we arrive at an holy heaven: there they complain no more of the hidings of God's face, *nor sit under the darkness and gloom of spiritual desertions*, for the sun of righteousness ever shines upon them, not only with meridian splendor and majesty but also with healing in his wings; of consequence they have no more doubts of the love of God to their souls nor concern lest they should not glorify him; they rest from these which are by much their greatest troubles in heaven, for God is *their shield and their exceeding great reward*.

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In heaven, again, good men rest from their temporal troubles: they are not exercised there with sickness or poverty, with reproach or bereavements; no, friends meet in heaven to part no more forever, their friendship grows and increases there, it gives daily fresh delight and is compleat and perfect: there is no more death there, through fear of which many good people are all their life time subject to bondage: indeed, they have no more trouble there of any kind, but all is peace and joy and felicity.

This is no contemptible part of that rest which remaineth to the people of God, for under these trials and afflictions they often groan, being burdened, not that they would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life; and it is secured to the believer by that word of God. Rev. vii. 17. *For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

Fourthly. A rest from temptation remaineth to all the people of God.

Satan is the prime ruler in the great monarchy of hell and is represented, in the word of God, as the accuser of the brethren and as going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour: good men are often vexed with his temptations here upon earth, but in heaven he never shews his accursed face; his fiery darts, wounding to soul and body here, become pointless there: how much severer the malice of his disposition may prompt him to

disturb the repose of the blessed, yet the ability is taken away from him, for the voice of the Highest to him is, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no further*: he cannot there infuse any blasphemous thoughts; he will excite no more murmurings against God; he will fill us no more with fears of eternal ruin, nor foment vicious propensities within us: the people of God, safe under the protection of the great captain of their salvation, and rejoicing in the triumphs of his love may bid defiance to the power and malice of Satan, and will rest forever from his temptations.

Fifthly, Heaven is a rest from mortification and self-denial.

The corruption and depravity of the human heart render men averse to that which is good and inclined to that which is evil, and this makes many duties of the divine life hard and difficult to be performed, while it is no easy matter to avoid the commission of those crimes to which our passions and appetites lead us: hence arises the necessity of self-denial and mortification, we must oftentimes go contrary to our inclination when we perform our duty, we must disregard the powerful cravings of sensual propensities when we avoid the practice of sin.

So necessary are these duties of mortification in the divine life that our Lord hath said expressly, *If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*: There remains an absolute necessity for the practice of these duties so long as we remain in the body, for so long the corrupt nature abides and remains within us.

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But that perfect holiness of which the saints in heaven are possessed takes away the necessity for the practice of these; they feel there no more inclination to sin nor aversion to holiness, but their duty is their delight and the service of God is their highest pleasure: they have no more need of crossing their corrupt inclinations, for none such remain within them; they have no more need of flying from temptation, of distrusting their own hearts, of keeping up so strict a watch over themselves and others; they feel no more backwardness to that which is good, but they are constantly animated and feel a divine vigor in the service of God, for they love him with a supreme, unabating affection.

How solemnly is the declaration of the apostle John to this purpose introduced, Rev. xiv. 13. *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them: this, my brethren, is the period of the christian race; this is the goal at which, would we be happy, we must all arrive.* But,

Sixthly. A compleat and perfect rest remaineth unto the people of God.

There is not the least remainder of sin or sorrow in heaven: there is nothing there which, in any sense or degree, can disturb or molest the blessed, for every thing is excluded which can give them the least uneasiness, or in any way diminish the plenitude of their

their felicity: all is peace and joy and love in heaven; the most perfect harmony subsists among its inhabitants, they dwell in everlasting felicity, and are partakers of never ceasing pleasures.

This leads me to say,

Seventhly, That the rest which remaineth to the people of God is everlasting.

Did the saints in glory know that their felicity should come to a period, they must necessarily be unhappy, for the dread of future evil, or the apprehension of the loss of present good, would imbitter or render tasteless every enjoyment; such is the constitution of things as that our happiness must be permanent in order to its being perfect.

The rest, the felicity therefore which remaineth to the people of God, is an everlasting rest, it shall know no period: as long as their immaterial, immortal spirits exist, they shall be happy: as long as the eternal Jehovah endures, as long as he who is the rock of ages, the ancient of days, the same yesterday, to day and forever abides, they shall abide with and be blessed in him, for God is their portion and rest, he will always continue to satisfy them from the fulness of his benignity: accordingly the promise made to the people of God, *Isaiah xlvi. 17.* is, *But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation* — *ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.* The happiness of the saints of God shall run parallel with the longest time of eternity; they shall never more return to pain, to sorrow nor distress, either

either temporal or spiritual, but shall be always blessed in the enjoyment of God and one another; they shall always abide in his presence where is fulness of joys and at his right hand where are pleasures evermore.

This is indeed an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, a weight sufficient to overpower our natural faculties, for eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the great and glorious things which God hath prepared for them that love him; therefore hath it become necessary that our mode of existence should be changed before we enter upon it; but death, when viewed as an introduction to this rest, must be considered as a friend, and instead of fearing his approach, we must long for the time when we shall lie down in the grave, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are forever at rest.

Let us attend now to the second thing proposed, viz.

II. To describe something of the character of
those to whom this rest belongs, or rather for
whom it remains.

Such a glory and blessedness as we have been describing is not reserved for all men without any distinction, it is bestowed only upon persons of a particular character, who are denominated in the text *the people of God*; some of the principal parts of their character we are now to mention. And,

First, they are cleansed from the guilt of sin.

Sin would unfit them for the presence and enjoyment of an holy God, he is of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look on iniquity: no sinner while his guilt cleaves to him can be acceptable in the sight of God or be admitted to enjoy the tokens of his favor; sin then must be taken away or we cannot be admitted to the rest which remaineth to the people of God.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ shews us how we may be cleansed from all our iniquities and be received as righteous in the sight of God; it points out to us his perfect righteousness and finished redemption as the only and at the same time sure foundation of our trust and confidence, declaring in the strongest terms that *the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin*: this gospel assures us, in equally plain terms, that we must be interested in this righteousness of Christ by faith and thus be united to him or we shall never enter upon eternal rest; we must be *justified freely of God's grace thro' the redemption there is in Christ Jesus the Lord*, and being justified by faith must have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ or we shall never behold the face of God in peace.

Secondly, It is another part of the character of the people of God that they are renewed and changed in the spirit of their minds.

The melancholy yet unquestionable doctrine of human depravity shews us the propriety of this observation: if mankind are naturally averse to God and

and divine things, if the sabbath is a burden; if prayer is disagreeable, if good discourse is unsavoury, if good men are hateful to them, if they do not love to think nor speak of God, then surely a total change must take place within them, before they can relish the enjoyments of the heavenly world.

For the rest which remaineth to the people of God, the very happiness of heaven, consists in such employments and enjoyments as these; it consists in communion with God, in acts of devotion and praise to him and in fellowship with the saints of God: there are no other employments or enjoyments there, none therefore calculated for the carnal, graceless heart, none but what would be in the highest degree burdensome to it: indeed, men in a natural state have no real desires after heaven properly considered, they have no relish for its enjoyments.

The dispositions and affections, the desires and pursuits of their souls must therefore be altered, or they can never enjoy the kingdom of God: a new nature must be given them, old things must pass away within them and all things become new, or they can never relish that spiritual enjoyment which heaven offers to them: this is an indispensable qualification of the people of God, for our Lord himself expressly asserts, John iii. 3. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

This leads me to say,

Thirdly, Holiness of heart and life is an essential part of the character of those to whom this rest remaineth.

No truth is more frequently or plainly revealed in scripture than this ; it is said expressly, Heb. xii. 14. —and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord : This holiness consists in conformity to God, and this conformity, in creatures like us, consists again in similitude to Jesus Christ, in following his example, in walking as he walked, and imbibing his spirit and temper ; exact therefore to our purpose is that declaration of the apostle, Rom. viii. 9, *Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his :* we must not only have the spirit of God, the source of all good, within us, operating upon and renewing our natures, but we must possess the frame, temper and disposition of mind which this blessed lamb of God discovered while here upon earth : we must, like him, have a supreme regard to God's honour, we must have an infinite aversion to sin, a great and constant delight in the worship of God, an hearty desire of the welfare of mankind, and a sincere grief for the hardness of mens hearts.

Such a temper of mind as this will necessarily produce an holy walk and conversation ; it will make us watchful against sin ; it will render us diligent in duty, it will lead us to avoid the most distant appearance of evil, and to be filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God : every grace of the divine spirit will be formed within us, and we shall grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is an infallible truth that none who prevailingly and habitually love sin can ever enjoy this rest, they are excluded by the frame and temper of their own minds, they are excluded also by an express word of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. *Know ye not that the unrighteous*

unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Let none of us then flatter ourselves with hopes of eternal life while we love and practice any one iniquity, let us labor after holy tears and lives in order to our enjoying an holy heaven.

Fourthly, The people of God excel in love.

Love constitutes, in one sense, the whole of religion; it consists in wishing well to all intelligent existence, and in desiring the happiness of every individual so far as this is consistent with the welfare of the whole: this is the temper of God himself, and as we have more than once observed, in conformity to God consists the religion of a rational creature.

Love is the happiness and employment of heaven; all its inhabitants are filled with love and joy unspeakable and full of glory: they delight in viewing the glory of God and the happiness of each other; each partakes of the others felicity and feels his own increased by it: the sacred flame of seraphic love catches from breast to breast; it animates, it warms, it inflames the whole celestial circle.

Unless we have the spirit of heaven formed within us here, we shall never enjoy the glory of heaven hereafter; the spirit of love then must be formed within us here; we must love the great God with truth and sincerity, we must love the Lord Jesus with a pure heart fervently: we must have a particular and special love to all those who bear the image of Christ, and must benevolently wish the welfare and

happiness of all mankind: the christian spirit is not narrow nor confined: it embraces in the arms of its affection not merely those who think and speak like itself, but all men, yea all beings which are in a capacity of happiness.

Love to the brethren expresses itself in regard for their company and conversation, and esteeming them as the excellent ones of the earth, in our taking particular pleasure in doing good to the household of faith: Love to mankind in general discovers itself in kind thoughts of, tender speeches about, and charitable actions towards them: if we say, be ye warmed and be ye cloathed only; if we see our brother, if we see any miserable object have need and relieve him not, if it is in our power to do so, we may depend upon it that we have no real love to mankind, but are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.

All malice, envy, wrath, clamour and evil-speaking are inconsistent with the spirit of love, and consequently of Christ and heaven: the malevolent, the envious, the passionate, the revengeful, are excluded therefore by everlasting bars and bolts from the kingdom of glory.

Fifthly, Those for whom this rest remains are weaned from the world.

If their principal delight was here they would not relish heaven nor have any desires after its refined, spiritual enjoyments: supreme love to God and the world are utterly incompatible, for no man can, at the same time, serve two masters: those whose principal desires, affections and purposes are placed here can have

have no real desires after another and better world, because here is their God and portion. It is an essential part therefore of the character of the people of God that they are weaned from this world, that they are spiritual and heavenly in the dispositions and pursuits of their souls: they are distinguished in the plainest manner from the children of this world, they feel themselves to be at a distance from their home, in a foreign kingdom, to the prince of which they owe no allegiance: they confess themselves to be pilgrims and strangers here upon earth, and seek a better country, a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God; their conversation is in heaven; and sometimes when from Pisgah's lofty top they are permitted to take a delightful survey of the Canaan before them, they wish and desire to depart and be with Christ which is much better; they adopt the language of the Psalmist, crying out, *Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest.*

These parts of the christian character are not indeed here in perfection; there are great remainders of corruption in the best of men, and this calls for the daily exercise of that *repentance which is unto life never to be repented of*; under a sense of these they look daily upon him whom they have pierced and mourn as one mourneth for an only son, and are in bitterness as one is in bitterness for a first-born, and often make use of the language of Job, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. Blessed are they that mourn in this way for they shall be comforted, and for such mourners in Zion there remaineth an everlasting rest.*

IMPROVEMENT.

I M P R O V E M E N T .

First, How thankful ought the people of God to be that this rest remaineth unto them.

If rest is pleasant to the weary upon earth, and those who impart it to others, are beloved and esteemed by them, much more will this rest of heaven be pleasant to the believer, and much more thankful will he be to the good God who hath provided it for him.

While we meditate upon this glorious rest we should consider that we have naturally no right to, nor claim upon it; that it was the free, rich mercy of God in Jesus Christ which hath procured it unto us, and that he freely bestows it upon all who will accept it! Surely, my brethren, if we had a proper sense of the value and importance of this rest, if we meditated more upon it, if we had more desires after it and had any earnest of it in our hearts, we should be filled with gratitude and thankfulness to that rich grace of God which hath purchased for and bestowed upon us such an inestimable inheritance!

Secondly, What a support is the consideration that such a rest remaineth for them, to the people of God, under all the trials and distresses of the present life.

We can endure labor much more patiently if we have the prospect of speedily entering upon rest, and if this rest is a reward and consequence of our labor it will support and animate us to it; the traveller sustains with patience all the fatigues of his journey because he hopes to come to its end at last, and the laborer toils through the day without murmuring.

muring, because he knows that he shall lie down to rest at night, and that *the sleep of the laboring man is sweet.*

And if this is the case with earthly things, if the prospect of a little temporary rest to the body can support us under the toils and fatigues of life, how much more shall the prospect of eternal rest and ease support us under the trials and afflictions which it is necessary for us to pass through here in order to our admittance to it: Surely, my brethren, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with that glory which shall be revealed! What are these light afflictions, which indeed for the present are not joyous but grievous, when we consider that they shall work out for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory? Shall we murmur against God for sending these things upon us, when they are absolutely necessary in order to our being admitted to glory? What are they all when brought in competition with *the rest which remaineth to the people of God?* Shall we not endure with patience that labor which is necessary in order to our relishing this rest? Surely we may say, welcome pain, welcome sorrow, welcome sickness, welcome poverty, welcome bereavements, yea welcome death itself, if this will but introduce us to rest! we may not complain of any part of the process which our divine physician sees it necessary for us to pass through in order to cleanse us from our spiritual diseases and prepare us for a state of everlasting health: we may not complain of God for hiding his face from us a few days and hours now, when we know that we shall dwell forever in his presence, *where is fulness of joys and at his right hand where are*

are pleasures evermore ! The evening of rest is approaching fast upon us, let us then endure with patience the labors of the day !

Thirdly, Let us all be solicitous not to fail of this rest !

It is a caution given us by the apostle in our context, *Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it !*

This caution may be applied to those who have set out in religion, and to those who are yet in their sins.

Let the first be careful of apostacy : Many a man hath set out fair in religion, hath had reason himself and given cause to others to think that he would be an ornament to his profession, who hath nevertheless returned *like the dog to his vomit, and like the sow to her wallowing in the mire* : You are ready to hope that you have a promise of entering into this rest ; I trust in God you have so ; do not nevertheless boast now that you are *girding on the harness as though you were putting it off* : be distrustful of the strength and vigor of your own resolutions ; depend upon the grace of Christ and walk circumspectly ; indulge not to any thing in the temper of your minds, or in the tenor of your lives, which is inconsistent with the spirit and temper of heaven : labor more and more after this spirit, and *knowing that your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in his work.*

An offer of the enjoyment of this glorious rest is made, my hearers, to every son of Adam who hears of the Gospel : none is excepted from it, nor can any

any one be hindered from enjoying it but by his own perverseness and obstinacy, so that there is a promise made even to you of entering into this rest, if you will comply with the proposals of the gospel.

And now, Sirs, let me warn, let me solemnly caution you against neglecting these offers and coming short of this rest: Your imaginations cannot conceive of its greatness and glory, it is offered to you, to you even though you may have been the chief of sinners: you have long neglected and despised these offers, you have been frequently warned against doing this, I now give you one solemn warning more (perhaps it may be the last which you will ever have) and beseech you to embrace this glorious offer and to be afraid of coming short of this rest.

A dreadful alternative is proposed to you if you do not embrace this offer! if you will not glorify the mercy of God, you must and will glorify his justice! if you do not spend an happy eternity with God and the *spirits of just men made perfect* in heaven, you must spend a miserable one with devils and damned spirits in hell.

It is high time that you awoke out of sleep and attended to these things; the hour of death is approaching fast upon you; your friends, your neighbours and acquaintance die away one after another from you, and your turn will soon come and you must enter on the eternal and invisible world, be exhorted therefore to prepare for this solemn hour, to secure an interest in the great atonement, to imbibe the spirit and live the life of heaven here, and then you shall assuredly enter upon the rest which remaineth to the people of God.

Fourthly, What a support is it under the loss of christian friends to reflect that *there remaineth a rest to the people of God.*

They are gone from all the labors and sorrows and troubles of this life to the enjoyment of eternal peace and rest in heaven ! they know no more sin nor affliction, but behold the unveiled face of the glorious Immanuel, are transformed into his likeness and reflect his glory in the celestial paradise !

Shall we then wish them to return again to the present sorrowful state ? can we desire that they should exchange the rest of heaven for the labor, the self denial and mortification of the present world ? or can we mourn their entrance on eternal felicity ? in the arms of their Jesus they enjoy uninterrupted happiness and look down with infinite contempt upon this world and all that it affords ; to wish them to return then would argue selfishness in us ; let this thought support us under bereavements, let us not mourn as those who have no hope, but let us be comforted for our christian dead.

Such consolations and supports have we, my brethren, under the loss of that eminent servant of God and faithful minister of Jesus Christ who was taken from your head this morning ! we have the fullest ground of confidence and hope that he is entered on *the rest which remaineth to the people of God*, and that he is reaping the rewards of a faithful servant in God's heavenly kingdom.

And may we not imagine that his gentle, placid, glorious spirit is looking down with complacency upon

upon his beloved people at this hour! how do we know but that departed spirits are permitted at some times to be with and observe the state and circumstances of their surviving friends! how do we know but that their spirits have intercourse with our own, although in a way insensible to us? at least we may cherish the pleasing imagination, for it serves to soothe and compose our grief!

I am very sensible that I am inadequate to the task of delineating the character of your beloved pastor; neither my age nor abilities render such an employment proper for me, but you must allow me, in gratitude to the friend of my father, to the guide of my own youth, to the watchful guardian of the seminary where I had my education, and the ornament of the town where I spent my earliest days, to attempt it, relying upon the assistance of heaven and trusting to your candor to excuse my failings.

[THE sphere in which Dr. ELIOT moved was so conspicuous as that every man of discernment was capable of forming a judgment as to his abilities: his genius was not of that kind which shews much more than it possesses; it was solid, penetrating and extensive; it was adapted to soar to the heights of science, as well as to delight itself with the milder studies of the polite arts.

The best natural abilities will not shine unless they are accompanied with the advantages of education: the unformed mind, like the unpolished diamond, possesses much more value than it appears to have: Education therefore is of the greatest consequence

quence in order to adapt men for public usefulness, and this advantage was indulged to and improved by the great and good man whom we this day lament ! he gave himself to his studies, he spared no pains to furnish his mind with the best knowledge human and divine, and arrived at a period in science which many have sought but few have attained : *having separated himself, he sought and intermeddled with all knowledge*, but he was not a pedant nor so swallowed up with a sense of his own superiority of knowledge as to scorn imparting it to others : on the contrary, having a remarkable facility in communicating his ideas, he opened the treasures of knowledge in public and private, and rejoiced to find them received with avidity and improved to advantage.

Neither the gifts of nature, the endowments of reason, nor the acquisitions of art would, in his view, have fitted him for the work of the ministry, had not his heart been seasoned with the grace of God : he early felt the impressions of serious religion upon his mind ; these were cultivated and improved by a diligent and constant walk with God, and *his path, like that of the just, shined more and more unto the perfect day !* his continual breathings after the spirit of the gospel, his constant endeavours to imitate the example of his divine redeemer, his relish for serious godliness, his regard for those whom he esteemed good men, his love to the house and ordinances of God, and his earnest endeavours to promote the interests of the redeemer's kingdom, were plain evidences that he loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and was really under the influence of the motives and principles of the religion of the gospel.

This

This love to the Lord Jesus Christ and a regard to the souls of men, we have every reason to believe induced him to enter upon the work of the ministry : this work was his delight, in it he shone with distinguished lustre, and this formed one of the brightest parts of his amiable and illustrious character.

Some of you, my brethren, remember his early appearances in the sacred desk, you remember how earnestly you coveted such excellent gifts and with what an unanimous consent you called him to the pastoral care of this church as a colleague with the Rev. Mr. Webb, *whose praise is still in these churches.*

Early deprived of his venerable assistant, he had the weight of this large congregation laid upon his shoulders : he was sensible of the burthen, he sometimes groaned under it, but his regard to God and his affection for you carried him through all his difficulties, and he chearfully employed his time, his talents, his opportunities in your service,

His public performances were always excellent ! remember you not, my brethren, with what an elevated devotion, with what a grateful variety of pertinent expression he would address the throne of grace ! at some times, especially when celebrating the peculiar mysteries of our holy religion, he would seem as if the veil was taken from before his eyes, as if heaven and its glories were bared to his view and he wished for the wings of a dove that he might flee away and enjoy the sum of that bliss whereof he had here the earnest ! unconfin'd to forms, let the occasion be what it would, he would pray with such pertinency

pertinency, fluency and fervency as evidenced plainly that he was no stranger at the throne of grace, but that he maintained a daily, intimate converse with God his maker.

His sermons were universally admired ; he possessed a most happy talent of arranging his thoughts and expressing them in a plain, elegant, nervous manner : when a man heard him preach, he would always think that this was the very way in which he would have wished to express himself, had he been called to speak upon the same subject : he discovered no design to work upon the passions ; his discourses were plain, pathetic and animated, without those strained descriptions and intemperate expressions which nauseate the serious mind ; and yet such was his manner as that many have observed, no man could sooner move their affections : you never knew him have a careless, inattentive auditory ; every eye would be fixed upon him and every ear would be open to imbibe the ingenious and instructive truths which distilled from his lips like rain upon the mown grass, as flowers that water the earth : this might be owing in a degree, perhaps, to the dignity, the gracefulness and unaffected fervor of his delivery ; that it was not wholly so is evident from the effect of perusing the many excellent discourses which, thanks be to God, he hath left published behind him ; by which, being dead, we may yet, as it were, hear him speak.

He believed and preached the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel of the grace of God, and it was his constant determination to know nothing among men

men save Jesus Christ and him crucified ; but his sermons were never filled with furious invectives against those who differed from him : controversial subjects, as much as possible, he avoided, thinking that they, by no means, tended to the use of edifying : he preached the plain, practical doctrines and precepts of the christian religion ; he set these before men in a convincing, affecting point of view, calculated to alarm the careless and quicken the tardy, without any of that bitterness of religious zeal which hath so often disgraced the assertors and preachers of the religion of love : he was at the furthest distance from bigotry, and daily manifested that *charity which hopeth all things and believeth all things.*

Catholicism formed a principal part of Dr. Eliot's character, he was not of that narrow, sordid temper which can embrace none but those of its own party ; he was properly a lover of mankind, he embraced within the arms of his christian affection all those who appeared to have an honest regard to religious truth, let their tenets or modes of worship be what they would ; and possessed the happy talent of securing mens affection and esteem while he opposed their favourite notions.

His conduct in discharging the more private duties of his ministerial function, caused him to be reverenced by all his people ; in his private visits he maintained the dignity of the minister, while he discovered the politeness of the gentleman and the affability of the friend : he carefully avoided stiffness on the one hand and levity on the other : his piety sat easy upon him, he discovered no ostentation of this

this nor of his abilities, but would steal instruction upon us in a way so gentle, and yet so prevalent that we felt he had done us good e're we perceived the method he took to do so.

He was ever ready to visit and sympathize with the sick and afflicted among his flock, and perhaps the disorder of which he died was occasioned by his performing such a labor of love! his counsels to the sick and the dying were always admirably adapted to their situation, and while he mingled his tears with those of his people who were called into affliction, he would drop those pious advices which would steal insensibly upon their minds and sooth them into patience and submission.

Two events, in the life of Dr. Eliot, manifested in the plainest manner, his regard for his flock and his respect to that which he esteemed to be his duty: some years since, the corporation of Harvard College, convinced of his abilities, of his prudence and admirable spirit of government, elected him to be President of that Society, but he viewed himself to be under such obligations to his own people as that he declined the honor: he could not think of breaking off the connexion which had so long and so happily subsisted between them, but expressed his earnest desire to live and die *their* minister.

The other event took place at the time when the common enemy of America was in possession of this town, and had compelled the inhabitants either to remain under a military government or to go out and leave their effects behind them: it so happened that

that a number of his parishioners, as well as many belonging to other societies, were obliged to tarry ; they joined in earnestly requesting him that he would remain and comfort them in the *house of their bondage*, as they supposed he might do with safety : his inclination led him to go out, his family were gone before him, and he knew that a long and to his tender mind, a tedious separation from them would be the consequence of his tarrying : in this dilemma he asked the advice of his friends and addressed the throne of grace for direction ; at length he concluded that it was his duty to *suffer affliction with the people of God* who remained in town, and in the opinion of many there was no period of his life in which he was more eminently useful : he appeared then to be more disengaged from the world, to have clearer views of divine things and firmer confidence in the promises of the gospel than he had ever had before : he calmly endured the deprivation of the pleasures of domestick life, with all the distressing solicitudes and hardships of that trying season, and was *strong in the Lord and in the power of his might* : he ministered to his friends and people in the town, he ministered also to his countrymen who were taken by the enemy and who were confined, amidst sickness and wounds, in prison ; he was constantly employed in doing good and in *comforting others with the same consolations wherewith he himself was comforted of God* : the malice of the enemy against him was restrained, and when we entered the town we beheld him once more with joy and transport : it is not easy to describe, though we can all remember, the pleasure and satisfaction which that meeting gave us ! But to return.

As he adorned a conspicuous station and his abilities were universally known and acknowledged, he was much improved in the service of these churches, for whose constitution he had an inviolable reverence, and whose interests he constantly labored to promote: his brethren in the ministry loved and esteemed him: his advice was universally sought and followed, his acquaintance courted, and his labors accepted among ministers of every denomination in this and in other countries.

Seasible that he could in no better way shew his esteem for the institutions of our venerable ancestors, or his regard to these churches, he watched over the College with the tenderest care: he early became acquainted with its interests and circumstances, he was early employed in its business, and paid a close and particular attention to it: his mind was constantly employed in devising means for its prosperity, and all his interest at home and abroad was made use of to procure it benefactors: did it suffer losses and need assistance, he was ready to exert himself to the utmost of his power to repair them, and procure such donations as should render its *latter end better than its beginning*: his exertions, in common with others the governors of that society, to procure the present elegant library and apparatus after the destruction of the former, are still remembered with affection and gratitude by the friends of that society! it is well known that he chearfully expended his time and his labor in order to promote its prosperity.

Intrusted by the society erected for that purpose in Great Britain, he labored indefatigably to promote the conversion of the natives of this land; he took pains

pains to find out suitable laborers to send out into this part of the Lord's harvest, and they are ready to testify to the solicitude which he manifested for their comfort as well as his watchful care over the interest of the charity.

It was an observable part of the character of this great and good man, that whenever he was employed in public business of any kind, he exerted himself with the same diligence, care and industry as if it had been his own : honest at heart and active in disposition, he was not slothful in business but fervent in spirit serving the Lord ! possessed of inviolable, incorruptible integrity, his friends and the public felt their interests to be as safe in his hands as in their own.

It would be injustice to his character not to declare that he always wished well to the interests of his country, and was a real, hearty friend to the freedom, the peace and independence of America.

His knowledge of mankind, and his intimate acquaintance with the ruling principles of human conduct, rendered him not only useful but agreeable : his acquaintance was large, all of whom valued and esteemed him with tenderness and respect : strangers who have been introduced to him, were always ready to acknowledge that he honored his profession and country : few men have acted their part so well upon the human stage, and fewer still have conciliated such universal esteem.

But, in the intimacies of private friendship and select conversation, he shone with peculiar lustre : a warm heart, an heart formed for all the pleasures and delicacies of this great balm of human life, caused

him to relish the enjoyments of friendship to the highest degree: he had no reserves with his friends, he treated them with an unconstrained freedom, he entered into their views, he made their joys and sorrows his own, and lived with them in such a manner as to lead them to view their connexion with him as the greatest happiness and enjoyment of their lives.

But let us change the scene a little and view his conduct and behaviour in his family relations; and here he manifested that he was of the character of a gospel *bishop*, *who must rule his own house well*: In his conduct to Mrs. Eliot he ever discovered a manly tenderness and a warm affection: he always shewed an earnest solicitude for the everlasting welfare of his children, he educated them in *the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, and spared no expense nor self-denial to make them useful and happy in the world: his affection was returned by his children, and at the same time they did him reverence! May God Almighty bless them all! may they remember the many pious and useful admonitions which they have received at the hands of their father! may those especially who are in, and who are designed for the work of the ministry, follow him as he followed Christ, and may a double spirit of Elijah descend and rest on these Elishas!

This was the character of Dr. Eliot while he lived, and he died in a manner becoming such a life! his sun set without a cloud! from his first seizure he viewed his disease as mortal: he set his house in order, he gave his directions and advices to his

his children and friends, with that firmness of mind which was ever a distinguishing part of his character, and which arose not from natural but from christian and gracious principles ! in his discourses upon his death bed, he always expressed an unshaken faith in those glorious doctrines of the grace of God which he had preached unto others, and his firm, yet humble confidence in the merits of the redeemer ! resigned to the will of God, nay eager after his presence and the enjoyment of his glory, he would frequently breathe out the pious ejaculation, *come Lord Jesus, come quickly, why are thy chariot wheels so long in coming?* and with a solemn message to his beloved people on his lips, he expired !

Thus lived and thus died the great and the good Dr. Eliot, a man universally esteemed and lamented ! surely we may call after him, *my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!* and cry, *help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, the faithful fail from among the children of men.]*

And now, my friends and brethren of this society, you will give me leave to urge upon you those considerations which the impressions made upon your minds by the recent death of your beloved minister, have rendered immediately proper and may therefore be especially useful ; I may not fail to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance to shew kindness and tenderness to the large and worthy family of your deceased pastor ! he is gone from you forever, and you are sorrowing most of all this day *that you shall see his face no more !* but he hath left these dear pledges of his love behind him : to God and

and to you he hath committed them, preserve the sacred deposit and manifest your regard for the dead by your kindness to the living ! *

But I have something of yet more importance to mention to you, something which were your beloved pastor now to appear before you clad in the dread habiliments of the grave, he would urge upon you with infinitely more zeal and earnestness, and that is, that you *remember how you have received and heard and improve aright, and I am confirmed in this by the message which he, this morning, left for me to deliver to you, tell my people, said the expiring saint, that I have ever preached to them the pure and the genuine doctrines of the gospel, and they are my support, my only support and comfort at this moment !* — See, my brethren, how a christian can die, and see the warmth of affection which your minister had for you, for these were the last words which ever he spake ! indeed, there never was a people favoured with a kinder friend in a pastor than you have been ; you have never wanted serious and faithful warnings, strong and fervent exhortations to quicken you to seek after that rest which remaineth to the people of God ; with what earnestness have you heard your departed minister, from this very place, plead with you to *attend to the things which concern your everlasting peace before they are forever hidden from your eyes* ! how has he poured out

* The author is exceedingly happy in informing the public that the generosity which was always shewn by his people to Dr. Eliot, while alive, hath been continued to his family since his decease. May God reward them for their kindness to the house of his servant.

out his very soul before you and travailed at birth again till Christ were formed in you ! it is to be feared that he hath pleaded in vain with many of you, that their insensibility to the great things of God and religion hath drawn many a bitter sigh, many a painful tear from him, when none were witnesses but God and his own soul : he is gone where he will be troubled no more with your unbelief and hardness of heart, but do you mean that all his faithful labors, warnings and reproofs should be lost upon you ? you parted with your minister in love and affection, do you mean to meet him as your accuser at the bar of Christ ? for well as he loved you, if you do not attend to that religion which he so earnestly inculcated upon you, he will be a swift witness against you in *that day* ! and can you endure the thought of this ! you find it hard parting with him now, how much harder will it be to see him mounting to the realms of glory, while you feel yourselves sinking into the bottomless pit !

These considerations are not laid before you to move your affections only, but in order that the death of your minister may be so improved by you as to do you good, that you may remember the pious warnings and instructions which you have so often heard at his mouth and seen in his example, both in public and private, that you may, like him, die the death of the righteous, and your latter end may be like his, that thus you may, with him, enjoy the rest which remaineth to the people of God.

Let christians remember, for their comfort, that the time is short, that they are hastening to the glorious rest upon which we have been meditating, that their separation